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ABSTRACT

One of a series of profiles prepared by the Cooperative Educational Abstracting Service, this brief outline provides basic background information on educational principles, system of administration, structure and organization, curricula, and teacher training in Belgium. Statistics provided by the Unesco Office of Statistics show enrollment at all levels, from preprimary to adult; number of teachers; population by age groups; public expenditure on education; educational indicators by subject (level enrollment ratios, maximum age specific enrollment ratio, enrollment in natural and applied sciences at the third level, public expenditure on education as a percentage of budget and of GNP, and the adult illiteracy rate). For a description on the general nature of the Country Education Profiles, and for a list of related documents see SO 005 686. (JMB)

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Country Education Profiles

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION & WELFARE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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Date of issue	Country
June 1972	BELGIUM

General principles

The Constitution promulgated on 7 February 1831 has just been revised, confirming the cultural autonomy of the two main linguistic communities (French-speaking and Dutch-speaking).

Article 17 of the Constitution proclaims the freedom of education. Compulsory schooling was introduced by the law of 19 May 1914. It is spread over a period of eight years, beginning after the summer holidays of the year in which the child has his sixth birthday. Education is free up to the end of secondary school. Under the Constitution, several different authorities can be responsible for school and out-of-school education: the State, the provinces, the communes, associations of communes, and private bodies. This gave rise to various conflicts and rivalries which the *Pacte scolaire* (education pact) of 1958 endeavoured to bring to an end. This pact, which established a twelve-year truce, is in process of revision.

In accordance with the principle of cultural autonomy, each main linguistic region has its own Ministry of Education and Culture, with two ministers, one for education, the other for culture. The Ministry of Education and Culture for the French-speaking region is also responsible for the institutions situated in the small German-speaking region. Institutions situated in the bilingual region of Brussels, come under either one or the other Ministry of Education and Culture, depending on the language system to which they belong.

Practically all responsibility for education is vested in the Ministries of Education and Culture; some other ministries continue to administer the branch of education directly related to their activities. They are concerned with a few special groups such as naval colleges, military colleges and agricultural continuation courses.

System of administration

The provisions governing the functions of the heads of primary, secondary and teacher training establishments

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and of State boarding-schools are contained in the Royal Order of 22 March 1969. These posts are reserved for teachers who have completed 10 years' service, and who have been awarded a principal's certificate after passing the tests organized by the State teachers' Recruiting and Promotion Board (Bureau de recrutement et de promotion du personnel enseignement de l'état). In secondary schools, the principal has the services of a secretary and of several masters performing purely supervisory and administrative functions.

Inspection is carried out by the organizing authority and especially by the State; to a lesser extent by the other authorities. A fairly flexible system of inspection is now operating for nursery schools under the direction of a chief inspectress. An inspector-general is in charge of primary schools, and under him come chief-inspectors, each of whom is responsible for about ten cantons, with a cantonal inspector at the head of each one. Apart from the State inspection services, there is a diocesan inspector (a Catholic priest) for each major administrative district. In addition, there are three inspectors of moral standards, five chief diocesan inspectors and one language inspector for each language system. In the case of secondary schools, the inspection services are organized on a subject basis within each language system.

Structure and organization

Optional pre-primary education is provided in kindergarten or nursery schools. About 94% of children between the ages of three and five are now enrolled in these schools. For children aged five and six, the figure is 100%. The primary course for children between six and twelve is spread over six years, divided into three two-year stages. It is provided either in autonomous primary schools or else in classes or sections attached to secondary, technical or teacher training establishments.

The renovation of secondary education is under way. The new course will comprise three stages of two years each: observation, orientation and determination, plus a preparatory class at the level of the first stage and a practical course beginning at the second stage. At the moment, the renovation programme has covered the first stage, including the preparatory class. The latter is intended only for pupils admitted to the secondary course on a trial basis.

The school year lasts from 1 September to 30 June, while the fiscal year begins in January. The weekly timetable consists of 26 hours for the primary course, 36 hours for the first two years of secondary, technical or vocational courses, and 40 hours for the remaining years of study.

In the official education system, two examination sessions are held every year (at the end of December and the end of June) but not before the fifth year of the primary school course. In private schools, examinations take place every term. Under the renovation programme for secondary education, however, a system of assessing the pupil's progress is being applied which dispenses with the traditional examinations set at regular intervals.

As a rule, the procedure governing promotion from one stage to the next consists of tests organized by the school authorities and teaching staff of the school concerned. The results are confirmed officially by a board of moderators in Brussels.

At the end of the secondary course there are no State examinations giving access to higher education. After holding the tests prescribed by law, it is the schools themselves which award the certificates or diplomas qualifying pupils to follow higher educational courses. These certificates are also endorsed officially by the board of moderators. However, the law of 8 June 1964, on the transferability of certificates, established principles for rationalizing the conditions of admission to university. The rapid development of all forms of higher education has made it necessary to undertake a further reorganization, the principles of which are laid down in the law of 7 July 1970. This provides that, in addition to a higher education system offering complete courses, there shall be a higher education system for social advancement. In particular, this innovation will make it possible to organize a general secondary course and university courses with a reduced timetable and to increase life-long educational opportunities for people already earning their living.

The same law replaces the graded structure of higher technical education by a structure comprising a long type of training extending over two stages and a shorter type limited to one stage (the minimum duration of studies being two years). By a Royal Order of 27 April 1971, every section of advanced technical training other than those falling within the province of the university was classified as a branch of higher education (agricultural, technical etc.).

Under the law of 6 July 1970, special education was introduced for handicapped children unable to follow ordinary courses. Special education is organized at the nursery, primary and secondary school levels.

The part-time education system (for social advancement) caters mainly for people already practising their occupation and who wish to specialize or to complete their training without being obliged to give up their work. However, some of the diplomas to which these courses lead also qualify successful students to follow the courses provided by the full-time education system. Such part-time courses are organized only by institutions providing technical or artistic education. The structure of the part-time education system is similar to that of the full-time education system and its main purpose is to provide training related to the students' occupation.

Correspondence courses, established by the State in 1959, are a highly individualized form of education which is adapted to each particular case. They are free of charge and are intended mainly for adults who wish to study either in order to broaden and develop their general or professional knowledge or to prepare for the examinations of the State boards of moderators with a view to obtaining equivalent qualifications to the certificates awarded by the schools.

Curricula

Curriculum development work is being approached in a new spirit. Instead of merely listing the subjects to be taught, curricula now seek to determine: the objectives to be attained, which are mainly concerned with the mental processes; the methods to be applied in the light of these objectives; the fundamental notions to be mastered; a basic vocabulary; procedures for assessing the pupil's academic progress; the points to be covered by a pupils' report card. The themes are chosen by a panel of teachers, bearing in mind the interests expressed by the pupils themselves. The curricula further aim at providing a well-balanced, pluridisciplinary, general education, avoiding rigid compartmentalization.

Teacher training

This question is currently under review. The traditional organization is as follows:

Ecoles normales gardiennes provide a four-year training course

for women teachers for pre-primary education. They are open to girls who have completed the lower secondary cycle. During the first two years, the students receive general training; the last two are devoted mainly to pedagogical training.

Ecoles normales primaires train men and women teachers for primary schools. The course is divided into two stages. The first, lasting three years, corresponds to the upper stage of the classical or modern "humanities" course provided in the general secondary schools. A human sciences section has recently been added to the traditional sections. The second stage, lasting two years, is a continuation of upper secondary education. It is primarily devoted to the pedagogical training of the future primary school teachers.

Ecoles normales moyennes provide a two-year training course leading to the diploma of *agrégé de l'enseignement secondaire inférieur* (lower secondary teaching certificate). These teachers are in charge of general subjects and certain special subjects in general and technical education at the lower secondary level.

Ecoles normales techniques moyennes provide a two-year training course for secondary technical teachers.

The universities are the only bodies which train teachers for upper secondary education. The students qualify for the degree of *agrégé de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur* (higher teaching certificate) which is obtainable either at the same time as, or after that, of *licencié* (conferred after four years of university studies). Future *licenciés-agrégés* specialize in one of the following disciplines: philosophy, history, classical philology, Romance philology, Germanic philology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology and mineralogy, zoology, botany, geography.

There is no institution specializing in the training of teachers for artistic education. Such teachers are chosen for their professional qualifications.

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STATISTICS : BELGIUM

(Source : Unesco Office of Statistics)

Estimated population 1970..... : 9 676 000

Area (Km2)..... : 30 513

Inhabitants per Km2..... : 317

1. ENROLMENT

Level of education	1965	1967	1968
Pre-primary			
MF.....	443 208	459 467	462 272
F	217 488	224 915	226 070
First level			
MF.....	979 626	1 002 611	1 008 444
F	475 726	486 393	488 979
Second level [1]			
MF.....	642 025	697 913	702 478
F	304 648	332 759	338 720
Third level			
MF.....	84 000	99 949	111 309
F	27 523	33 777	38 602
Special education			
MF.....	40 168	45 857	52 375
F	16 783	17 933	20 330
Adult education			
MF.....	210 628	[2] 121 975	...
F	107 927	[2] 67 143	...

1) Full time education only.

2) 1966

2. TEACHERS

Level of education	1965	1967	1968
Pre-primary			
MF.....	15 435	16 218	...
F	15 435	16 218	...
First level			
MF.....	47 488	47 902	...
F	26 074	26 752	...
Second level			
MF.....	...	...	...
F	...	...	...
Third level			
MF.....	...	....	...
F	...	...	...
Special education			
MF.....	...	...	...
F	...	...	...
Adult education			
MF.....	...	...	...
F	...	...	...

3. POPULATION

In thousands

Population by age groups	1965		1970	
	Total	Female	Total	Female
Total population	9 464	4 819	9 683	4 930
0 - 4	780	380	779	380
5 - 14	1 481	725	1 538	755
15 - 19	706	347	716	351
20 - 14	566	276	705	347

4. PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Currency : Franc

In thousands

Item	1) 1965	1968	1969
Exchange rate in US $	0.020	0.020	0.020
Public expenditure on education			
Total	35 576 932	51 657 000	62 308 000
Recurring	32 554 958	45 674 000	55 969 000
Capital	3 021 974	5 983 000	6 339 000

1) Ministry of education only.

5. EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS BY SUBJECT

Subject	1965	1967	1968
Level enrolment ratios			
First and second levels combined (age group : 6-18)	86	89	89
First level (age group : 6-11)	109	110	110
Second level[1] (age group : 12-18)	1) 64	1) 69	1) 69
Third level (age group : 20-24)	14.84	16.17	17.23

1) Full time education only.

Subject	1960	1966
Maximum age specific enrolment ratio		
a) attending first level (age 7)	100	100
b) attending second level (age 13) (including general education only)	54.1	45.6
Note : For ratios of all ages, see Unesco Statistical Yearbook		

5. EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS BY SUBJECT
(Cont'd)

Subject	1965	1967	1968
Education at the third level : Natural and applied sciences +/ as a percentage of total enrolment (1)	...	46.6	46.2
Third level graduates per 10 000 inhabitants aged 20-24	291.2	1) 145.4	1) 154.2

+/ Natural and applied sciences (i.e. Natural Sciences, Engineering, Medical Science and Agriculture).

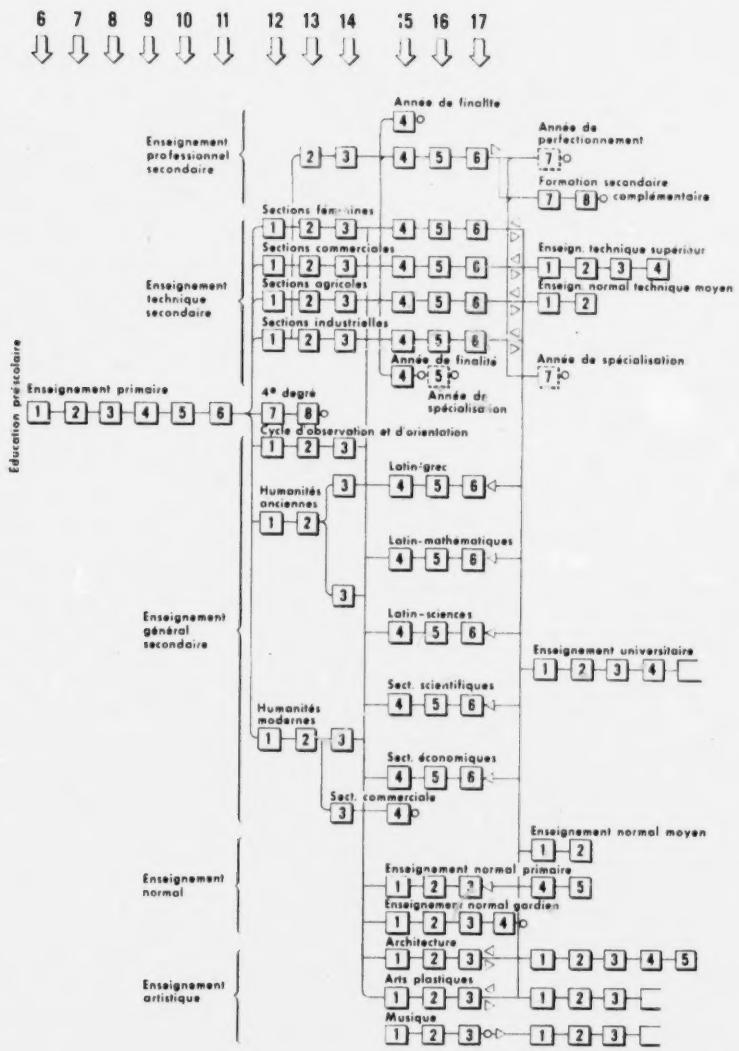
1) Universities and equivalent degree-granting institutions only.

Subject	1) 1965	1968	1969
Public expenditure on education			
as a % of Budget	18.8	...	20.6
as a % of GNP	4.2	5.0	5.4
Public and private expenditure on education as a % of GNP	...	...	...

1) Ministry of education only.

5. EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS BY SUBJECT
(Cont'd)

Subject	1947
Adult illiteracy rate	
(population 15 years and over)	
Total	3.3
Male	3.2
Female	3.4


6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
Education préscolaire
Enseignement primaire
Enseignement professionnel secondaire
Enseignement technique secondaire
Enseignement général secondaire
Enseignement normal
Enseignement artistique
Sections féminines
Sections commerciales
Sections agricoles
Sections industrielles
4e degré
Cycle d'observation et d'orientation
Humanités anciennes
Humanités modernes
Latin-grec
Latin-mathématiques
Latin-sciences
Sect. scientifiques
Sect. économiques
Sect. commerciale
Année de finalité
Année de spécialisation
Année de perfectionnement
Formation secondaire complémentaire
Enseign. technique supérieur
Enseign. normal technique moyen
Enseignement universitaire
Enseignement normal moyen
Enseignement normal primaire
Enseignement normal gardien
Architecture
Arts plastiques
Musique

NEW SCHOOL SYSTEM (experimental) since 1969
being introduced (up to 3rd secondary year - 15 years)
under Law of 7 July 1970